

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, UR, XF

SUBJECT: SOVIET ME EXPERT'S VIEWS ON ME SITUATION

REF: MOSCOW 4515

1. SUMMARY. IN CONVERSATION WITH POLITICAL COUNSELOR
APRIL 24 AFRICA INSTITUTE DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND MIDDEL
EAST SCHOLAR DR. IGOR BELYAYEV STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE
OF RESUMING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AND ESTABLISHING
AN ACTIVE U.S.-USSR ROLE IN GENEVA BY THE RETURN OF
AMBASSADOR BUNKER. BELYAYEV REFERRED TO GROMYKO'S
APRIL 23 SPEECH FOR SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM
AS AN AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT OF SOVIET MIDDLE EAST
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POLICY. IN SPECULATING ABOUT THE FORMULAS FOR A

MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, BELYAYEV EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING A PALESTINIAN STATE OUT OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA WHICH HE ASSERTED WOULD PROVIDE A "BASE" FOR THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. BELYAYEV SAID HE BELIEVES ARAFAT, WHOM HE CHARACTERIZED AS A MODERATE, WOULD ACCEPT A SETTLEMENT OF THIS KIND AND THAT A SOLUTION TO THE REFUGEE PROBLEM BASED ON SUCH A SETTLEMENT, COMBINED WITH THE IMPORTANCE PALESTINIANS WOULD ATTACH TO THE CREATION OF THEIR OWN STATE, WOULD END THE INFLUENCE OF THE MILITANT PALESTINIAN REJECTIONISTS. BELYAYEV ALSO CLAIMED A PEACE SETTLEMENT WOULD RESULT IN A NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HER IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD PROBABLY PRODUCE NO RECONCILIATION WITH THE MORE MILITANT ARAB STATES IRAQ, LIBYA AND SUDAN. BELYAYEV CHARACTERIZED SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS AS BASICALLY UNCHANGED FROM WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN SINCE THE EMOVAL OF SOVIET ADVISORS IN 1972. AND HE SUGGESTED THAT THE USSR'S ROLE IN EGYPTIAN ECONOMIC AND MILITARY DEVELOPMENT IS LIKELY TO BE CIRCUMSCRIBED FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. GENEVA CONFERENCE. BELYAYEV REFERRED TO GROMYKO'S APRIL 23 SPEECH FOR SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM AS AN AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT OF SOVIET MIDDLE EAST POLICY AND STRESSED HIS VIEW THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO ACTIVATE THE GENEVA FORUM. HE REPEATED A POINT HE EMPHASIZED WITH MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN UN ASSOCIATION DELEGATION RECENTLY THAT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE U.S. AND USSR REPRESENTATIVES TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE SHOULD BECOME ACTIVE AND THAT IT WAS CONSEQUENTLY IMPERATIVE FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER TO RETURN TO GENEVA (REFTEL).

3. SOVIET-PLO RELATIONS. BELYAYEV CLAIMED NO SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AN ARAFAT VISIT TO MOSCOW BUT TSAID HE HAD HEARD THE REPORTS. ON THE HANDLING OF ARAFAT'S VISIT, HOWEVER, HE COMMENTED INTERESTINGLY THAT PLO VISITS ARE NOW HANDLED BY "OFFICIAL AUTHORITIES," AND NOT BY "SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS" (THE NORMAL SPONSOR

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FOR PLO DELEGATIONS UNTIL LAST FALL WAS THE AFRO-ASIAN SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE), AS WAS THE CASE IN THE PAST. BELYAYEV WOULD NOT BE DRAWN OUT ON ARAFAT'S VISIT OR THE VISITS BY EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMY OR SYRIA'S KHADDAM.

4. ME SETTLEMENT. BELYAYEV OFFERED THE ROUTINE FORMULA -- A LA GROMYKO'S SPEECH APRIL 23 -- FOR A

MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, BUT HE WENT FURTHER THAN USUAL IN SPECULATING ABOUT A SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. HE SAID CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. HE SAID CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN ENTITY OUT OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA WOULD PROVIDE A "BASE (BAZA)" FOR THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION OF THE WHOLE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. THE FINAL FORM THIS ENTITY WOULD ASSUME IS STILL IN DOUBT (I.E., AN INDEPENDENT STATE OR A PART OF SOME TYPE OF FEDERATION), BELYAYEV SAID. BUT CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE WOULD PROVIDE THE INSTRUMENT FOR DEALING WITH THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE PALESTINIAN DILEMMA.

5. ACCORDING TO BELYAYEV, THE CREATION OF A STATE WOULD HAVE THE IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF PROVIDING ALL PALESTINIANS, INCLUDING THOSE LIVING IN THE DIASPORA, WITH CITIZENSHIP. THIS WOULD END THE PALESTINIANS' PRESENT AMBIGUOUS STATUS AND UNCERTAIN CONDITION BY PROVIDING ALL PALESTINIANS WITH ONE OF THREE OPTIONS: ACCEPT PALESTINIAN CITIZENSHIP AND RETURN TO THE NEW STATE, TAKE PALESTINIAN CITIZENSHIP AND REMAIN AS FOREIGN RESIDENTS IN THE STATES WHERE THEY NOW LIVE, OR CHOOSE TO BECOME NATIONALS OF THE STATES IN WHICH THEY CURRENTLY RESIDE.

6. CREATON OF A PALESTINIAN ENTITY WOULD ALSO LAY THE FONDATION FOR A SOLUTION TO THE REFUGEE PROBLEM AND FOR PUTTING AN END TO THE REFUGEE CAMPS. SOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM, HOWEVER, HAS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE THREE DISTINCT ELEMENTS WHICH MAKE UP THE REFUGEE POPULATION. ACCORDING TO BELYAYEV, A SOLUTIN TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE MOST RECENT
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REFUGEES -- THOSE WHO LOST THEIR HOMES AS A RESULT OF THE 1967 WAR -- WOULD BE RELATIVELY SIMPLE BECAUSE MOST HAVE HOMES AND PROPERTY ON THE WEST BANK TO WHICH THEY CAN RETURN. A SECOND GROUP WHOSE INTERESTS COULD BE MET WITHOUT GREAT DIFFICULTY ARE REFUGEES WHO HAVE STABLISHED THEMSELVES IN OTHER ARAB STATES. THESE EXPATRIATES WOULD PROBABLY REMAIN IN THEIR PRESENT HOMES AND BE SATISFIED WITH SOME FORM OF COMPENSATION. THE THIRD GROUP, MADE UP OF THOSE REFUGEES WHOSE FORMER HOMES ARE IN WHAT IS NOW ISRAEL, WOULD BE MOST DIFFICULT TO ACCOMMODATE. THESE REFUGEES WOULD HOWEVER, BE ABLE TO START ANEW EITHER IN A PALESTINIAN STATE OR ELSEWHERE. IN THIS CONNECTION BELYAYEV ADDED THAT HE THOUGHT IT VERY UNLIKELY ISRAEL HAD ANYTING TO FEAR FROM AN OFFER TO

ACCEPT SOME OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES. MOST PALESTINIANS, HE SAID, WOULD NOT WANT TO LIVE IN ISRAEL AND WOULD ACCEPT COMPENSATION AND RESETTLEMENT IN A NEW PALESTINIAN STATE OR OTHER AAB COUNTRY INSTEAD.

7. ASKED WHETHER THE PLO AND/OR OTHER MORE MILITANT PALESTINIAN GROUPS WOULD ACCEPT SUCH A SETTLEMENT, BELYAYEV SAID HE THOUGHT THE PLO WOULD. ARAFAT IS A MODERATE, HE STRESSED. AS TO THE MORE MILITANT REJECTIONISTS, BELYAYEV SUGGESTED THAT THE ZIONIST EXPERIENCE IN ESTABLISHING THE JEWISH STATE OFFERS AN ANALAGOUS SITUATION. PRIOR TO THE FOUNDATON OF ISRAEL THE MOST MILITANT ZIONIST ORGANIZATIONS, THE IRGUN AND STERN GANG, VIOLENTLY OPPOSED THE UN PARTITION PLAN. YET WHEN ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE WAS PROCLAIMED, THE ISRAELIS "DANCED IN THE STREETS" AND THE ZIONIST MILITANTS' OPPOSITION TO THE UN PLAN DISAPPEARED.

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8. POLITICAL COUNSELOR ASKED BELYAYEV ABOUT ARAB-ISRAELI RELATIONS AFTER A PEACE, AND BELYAYEV SAID ISRAEL'S RELATIONSHIP WOULD PROBABLY BE DIFFERENT WITH DIFFERENT STATES. THERE APPEARED ALMOST NO CHANCE THAT NORMAL RELATIONS WOULD BE ESTABLISHED WITH IRAQ, LIBYA OR SUDAN. THE ATTITUDE OF SAUDI ARABIA AND THE GULF STATES IS HARD TO PREDICT. THE GULF STATES, HOWEVER, WOULD PROBABLY FOLLOW THE SAUDI LEAD, WHICH COULD DEPEND ON RESOLUTION OF THE JERUSALEM PROBLEM. RELATIONS WITH EGYPT AND JORDAN, BELYAYEV SAID, WOULD BE EASILY REGULARIZED AND SYRIA WOULD GO ALONG. AS TO A PALESTINIAN ENTITY, RELATIONS ALREADY EXIST, PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD. SOME 330,000 PALESTINIANS, ACCORDING TO BELYAYEV,

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ALREADY DEPEND ON THE WAGES OF THE 60,000 PALESTINIAN WORKERS EMPLOYED IN ISRAEL, AND ISRAEL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS STATE WOULD DEVELOP QUICKLY.

9. SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE STATE OF SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS, BELYAYEV SAID THEY ARE ABOUT THE SAME AS THEY HAVE BEEN SINCE 1972 AFTER SOVIET ADVISORS WERE REMOVED. EGYPTIAN POLICY IS DICTATED BY AN EFFORT TO BALANCE THE INFLUENCE OF THE SUPERPOWERS AND THIS CAUSES VARIATIONS AND SWINGS IN EGYPT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE USSR. AS TO SPECIFICS, BELYAYEV SAID EGYPT PRESENTLY CONFRONTS A TIME OF DECISION ABOUT ITS FUTURE. DECISIONS MUST BE MADE IN THE NEAR FUTURE ABOUT WHETHER EMPHASIS WILL BE PLACED ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WHICH WILL MEAN A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION IN THE SIZE OF MILITARY EXPENDITURES, OR WHETHER EGYPT WILL SEEK TO DEVELOP ITS OWN MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE AND ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY TO SUPPORT A MASSIVE ARMY. THE OUTCOME OF THE MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT WILL OF COURSE BE CENTRAL TO EGYPT'S DECISION, BELYAYEV SAID. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, HOWEVER, BELYAYEV THOUGHT SOVIET RELATIONS WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE ALONG THE GENERAL LINE THEY HAVE ASSUMED SINCE 1972. THE USSR CAN ONLY EXPECT TO RECEIVE "RAW MATERIALS" FROM EGYPT AND MOSCOW'S PARTICIPATION IN EGYPTIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS CIRCUMSCRIBED BY ITS ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE MAINLY IN THE STATE SECTOR. THE USSR DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO SATISFY THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PRIVATE COMPETITIVE SECTOR. BELYAYEV WAS

SOMEWHAT LESS PRECISE ABOUT SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS
IN THE MILITARY FIELD, HOWEVER, HE IMPLIED, BOTH BY
STRESSING THAT EGYPT WILL HAVE TO DECIDE ABOUT ITS
OWN MILITARY FUTURE AND THAT THE USSR IS NOT LIKELY
TO MEET UMLIMITED EGYPTIAN REQUESTS FOR THE LATEST
SOPHISTICATED MILITARY EQUIPMENT, THAT HE DOES
NOT ENVISION A MASSIVE SOVIET MILITARY PROGRAM FOR EGYPT.

10. COMMENT: BELYAYEV IS RECOGNIZED AUTHORITY ON
MIDDLE EAST, PARTICULARLY PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS, AND IS
SCHOLAR WITH BROAD CONTACTS AMONG ARABISTS HERE AND
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IN ARAB WORLD ITSELF. HE IS PERSONALLY ACQUAINTED
WITH ARAFAT AND LAST SAW HIM IN FEBRUARY. BELYAYEV
ALSO APPEARS AS A FREQUENT SOVIET CONTACT FOR WESTERNERS
IN TALKS ON THE ME. HE RECENTLY PARTICIPATED HEAVILY
IN THE PROGRAM FOR THE U.S. UN ASSOCIATION DELEGATION.
AS NON-OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN, HE IS, AS ABOVE ACCOUNT
INDICATES, WILLING TO ENGAGE IN PERSONAL SPECULATION
WHICH OFFICIALS HERE RARELY DO. HOWEVER, BELYAYEV'S
PROMINENCE IN THE SOVIET ACADEMIC AND JOURNALISTIC
COMMUNITY PROVIDES HIM WITH ACCESS TO IMPORTANT
SOVIET OFFICIALS.

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